

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 7-19 are presently pending in this application. Claim 19 has been allowed. Claims 15 and 16 stand objected to. Claims 1, 7-14, 17 and 18 stand rejected.

Claims 1-14 have been canceled and new claims 20-32 have been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Debronsky, Jr. et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,797,142) in view of Boynton (U.S. Pat. No. 4,467,503). Claims 1, 9 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Benedict (U.S. Pat. No. 2,006,708) in view of Boynton. Claims 1, 11, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moss (U.S. Pat. No. 5,326,610) in view of Boynton. Claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moss in view of Orr (U.S. Pat. No. 3,871,027).

Claims 1-14 have been canceled. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 17 and 18.

Claims 17 and 18 are limited to embodiments wherein a pouch layer provides a pouch enclosure adjacent to the base layer and both the base layer and the pouch layer are made from a soft absorbent paper material. Applicant submits that none of the cited references, either alone or in combination with one another, teach, disclose or fairly suggest such embodiments.

It is the examiner's position that those of ordinary skill in the art would find such embodiments obvious in view of the teachings of Moss and Orr. Applicant believes that such a position is not supportable. Moss teaches a washcloth having a pocket for retaining a bar of soap such that the bar of soap cannot be dislodged from the pocket. Orr teaches an absorptive baby burping pad which can be made from an absorbent paper material. The examiner argues that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have incorporated paper materials, such as taught by Orr, into the washcloth taught by Moss to "increase the ability of the article to absorb liquids and lower manufacturing costs." This argument appears to be clearly fallacious. No one of ordinary skill in the art would attempt to make a washcloth such as taught by Moss with a paper material for any reason. The idea is clearly absurd. A paper washcloth would rapidly dissolve and would be little more than a disposable paper towel. There would be no reason to incorporate a pouch capable of retaining a bar of soap in such a paper washcloth because no one would consider washing themselves with such a product. At most, such a product would be used for cleaning up kitchen spills and the like, such as an ordinary paper towel is used. For such a use, however, a pouch would be clearly irrelevant. Moreover, there is nothing in Moss or Orr (or common sense) which would suggest that the manufacturer of the Moss washcloth with a paper material would "increase the ability of the article to absorb liquids." Finally, the argument that a paper washcloth would "lower manufacturing costs" obviously begs the question as to whether such a product would have any value to the consumer (and therefore be an obvious item of manufacture to one of ordinary skill in the art) - no matter how inexpensive the product could be manufactured.

Accordingly, the argument that one of ordinary skill in the art would have found the embodiments claimed in claims 17 and 18 obvious in view of the combined teachings of Moss and Orr is in error. The rejection of claims 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Objections to Claims 15 and 16

Claims 15 and 16 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in proper independent form. However, claims 15 and 16 were previously amended to depend from claim 19 which stands allowed. Accordingly, the objections to claims 15 and 16 should be withdrawn.

New Claims 20-32

New claims 20-32 have been added to claim the unobvious method of using a handkerchief with a pouch to catch and retain expelled solid particles and liquid droplets from a cough, sneeze or nose blow. Nothing in the cited references teaches, discloses or fairly suggests such a method. Accordingly, applicant believes that new claims 20-32 should be deemed allowable.

In addition, claims 29 and 30 are limited to pouch layers having a thickness different than the thickness of the base layer, claim 31 is limited to embodiments wherein both the base layer and the pouch layer are made from a soft absorbent linen material and claim 32 is limited to embodiments wherein both the base layer and the pouch layer are limited to soft absorbent paper material. For these additional reasons, each of these additional claims should also be deemed allowable.


CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims remaining in the application are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration, reexamination and allowance of all claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

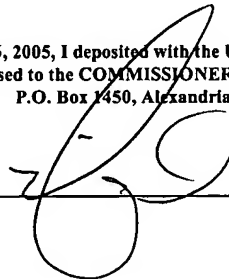
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